CLAIMS:

1. A system for automatically conducting a business transaction between a user and a trader including:

a trader terminal including billing information representative of said trader;

5 a user terminal or user card associated with a user terminal;

a local communications link provided between said user terminal or said user card and said trader terminal;

wherein an order for goods and/or services of the trader is initiated by transmitting data over said link, using a message protocol, from said user terminal

10 to be received by said trader terminal;

said user terminal or said user card receiving and processing user information representative of said user, and for receiving and processing said billing information via said link in response to said order, a communications network enabling said user terminal to communicate with a service provider, wherein said user terminal

15 transmits said billing information and said user information to said service provider over said communications network, whereupon said service provider automatically transfers funds of said user to said trader under the authorization of said user to effect a financial transaction between said user and said trader.

2. A system according to claim 1 wherein said order is automatically

20 transmitted when said user terminal is within the proximity of said trader terminal.

3. A system according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said user terminal or said user card receives said billing information from said trader terminal through said local communications link when said user terminal or said user card is in the vicinity of said trader terminal.

25 4. A system according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said user terminal or said user card receives said billing information from said trader terminal through said

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local communications link when said user terminal or said user card is linked to said trader terminal.

5. A system according to any one of claims 1 ~~to 4~~ wherein said financial transaction is authorised by said user upon entry of a PIN on said user terminal.

6. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims$_1$ wherein prior to any transfer of funds confirmation of said order is entered on said user terminal by said user.

7. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims$_1$ wherein funds of said user are reserved for transfer to said trader, the reserved funds being transferred
10 either partially or in full according to certain criteria relating to goods and/or services purchased by said user.

8. A system according to claim 7 wherein said certain criteria includes any one of amount of use of said goods and/or services, duration of use of said goods and/or services.

9. A system according to claim 7 ~~or claim 8~~ wherein the partial transfer of reserved funds are transferred in installments and the amount of each installment is controlled in accordance with said billing information.

10. A system according ~~to any one of the previous~~ claims wherein delivery destination information for goods and/or services purchased by said user is
20 transmitted to said service provider, together with said billing information and said user information.

11. A system according to claim 10 wherein, information identifying said goods and/or services purchased by said user are transmitted, together with said delivery
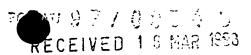
destination information, to an electronic warehouse, or the like.

12. A system according to claim 11 wherein said electronic warehouse allocates said goods and/or services on the basis of said information identifying said goods and/or services purchased by said user, and initiates delivery of said goods and/or

5 services on the basis of said delivery destination information for collection by said user.

13. A system according to claim 12 wherein the transfer of funds, including reserved funds, of said user to said trader takes place upon completion of delivery, or acceptance by said user, of said goods and/or services.

10 14. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said billing information is incorporated into a trader card at said trader terminal.

15. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said user terminal has data acquisition means, such as detector means, for sensing and receiving said trader billing information at said trader terminal.

15 16. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said user terminal stores said user information, said user information including user identification and an account of said user from which funds are transferred.

17. A system according to claim 16 wherein said user terminal has computing processor means for processing said billing information and said user information.

20 18. A system according to ~~any one of~~ claims 10 ~~to 17~~ wherein said user terminal stores said delivery destination information, or said delivery destination information is input by said user when prompted by said user terminal.

19. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said user terminal has interface means adapted to transmit any of all of said billing information, said user information, information identifying goods and/or services purchased by said user and delivery destination information to said service provider

5 over said communications network.

20. A system according to ~~any one of~~ claims 12 ~~to 19~~ wherein confirmation messages of completion of all or part of the financial transaction are transmitted by said service provider and confirmation of delivery of goods and/or services is transmitted by said electronic warehouse, to said trader and said user.

10 21. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said user terminal is adapted to receive said user card, said user card being unique to a particular user.

22. A system according to claim 21 wherein said user card pre-stores said user information, said user information including user identification and an account of

15 said user from which funds are transferred.

23. A system according to claim 21 ~~or claim 22~~ wherein said user card has data acquisition means incorporated therein, such as detector means, for sensing and receiving said billing information at said trader terminal.

24. A system according to ~~any one of~~ claims 21 ~~to 23~~ wherein said user card has

20 computing processor means for processing said billing information and said user information.

25. A system according to ~~any one of~~ claims 21 ~~to 24~~ wherein said user card pre-stores delivery destination information.

26. A system according to claim 24 ~~or claim 25~~ wherein said user terminal has reader means for reading any one or all of said billing information, said user information and delivery destination information.

27. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein the user is
5   informed, through the user terminal, of all processes being conducted in respect of the business transaction.

28. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said transaction is reversible such that a partial or full refund to the user from the trader for said goods and/or services takes place and is initiated by said trader on the basis
10 of certain criteria, such as quality control.

29. A system according to claim 28 wherein said transaction is reversed by accessing a database of said service provider through a communications system operating between said trader and said service provider.

30. A system according to claim 29 wherein said database stores information
15 relating to each transaction by an identification code.

31. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said trader has access to an account of said trader into which funds are transferred, through said service provider, so as to verify transaction details in said account of said trader.

20 32. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein said user terminal has access to an account of said user to verify that sufficient funds are available for said transaction.

33. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims including goods

and/or services having associated taxes/imposts applied by a legislative body, wherein the transfer of funds of said user includes said service provider transferring the associated amount of taxes/imposts to the legislative body.

34. A system according to ~~any one of~~ claims 28 ~~to 30~~ including goods and/or

5 services have associated taxes/imposts applied by a legislative body, and in a reversible transaction, wherein the amount of taxes/imposts previously transferred to the legislative body is transferred to said user.

35. A system according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claims wherein the user terminal is incorporated in said trader terminal and said user information is

10 incorporated in either said user terminal or said user card.

36. A method of automatically conducting a business transaction between a user and a trader, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a local communication link between a user terminal and a trader terminal;

15 transmitting over said link an order by said user for goods and/or services of said trader using said user terminal;

receiving said order at said trader terminal;

wherein said order is transmitted and received using a messaging protocol;

receiving by said user terminal, or by a user card associated with a user

20 terminal, trader billing information representative of said trader from said trader terminal via said link,

processing on said user terminal or said user card said trader billing information and user information representative of said user,

transmitting said trader billing information and said user information to a

25 service provider over a communications network, and

automatically transferring funds of said user to said trader via said service provider under the authorization of said user to effect a financial transaction

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between said user and said trader.

37.   A method according to claim 36 wherein the step of transmitting an order includes automatically transmitting said order when said user terminal is within the proximity of said trader terminal.

38.   A method according to claim 36 ~~or claim 37~~ wherein the receiving step includes receiving said trader billing information through said local communications link when said user terminal or said user card is in the vicinity of said trader terminal.

39.   A method according to claim 36 ~~or claim 37~~ wherein the receiving step
10   includes receiving said trader billing information through said local communications link when said user terminal or said user card is linked to said trader terminal.

40.   A method according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claim 36 wherein said financial transaction is authorised by said user upon entry of a PIN on said user terminal.

41.   A method according to ~~any one of the previous~~ claim 36 wherein prior to said
15   transferring step, the method includes the step of the user confirming said order using said user terminal.

42.   A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 41~~ wherein the step of transferring funds includes transferring reserve funds of said user, said reserve funds being transferred either partially or in full according to certain criteria relating to
20   goods and/or services purchased by said user.

43.   A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 42~~ further including the step of transmitting delivery destination information for goods and/or services purchased by said user to said service provider, together with said trader billing information

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and said user information.

44.   A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 43~~ further including the step of transmitting information identifying said goods and/or services purchased by said user and transmitting said delivery destination information to an electronic

5   warehouse, or the like.

45.   A method according to claim 44 further including the step of allocating said goods and/or services on the basis of said information identifying said goods and/or services purchased by said user, and initiating delivery of said goods and/or services on the basis of said delivery destination information for collection by said user.

10   46.   A method according to claim 45 wherein the step of transferring funds, including reserve funds, follows the completion of delivery or acceptance by said user of said goods and/or services.

47.   A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 46~~ wherein the step of receiving is performed by data acquisition means, such as detector means, which

15   is either integrated into said user terminal or integrated in a user card, said user card adapted to be inserted into and received by said user terminal.

48.   A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 47~~ wherein the step of processing is carried out by said user terminal or said user card, the user card having computing processor means for carrying out said processing.

20   49.   A method according to claim 47 ~~or claim 48~~ further including the step of reading, through reader means, any one or all of said trader billing information, said user information and delivery destination information.

50.   A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 49~~ further including the step

of informing, through said user terminal, said user of all processes being conducted in respect of said business transaction.

51. A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 50~~ including the step of reversing said business transaction in the event that goods and/or services purchased
5   by said user fail to meet certain criteria, such as quality control, said reversing of said transaction being initiated by said trader and including a partial or full refund to said user.

52. A method according to claim 51 and where said goods and/or services have associated taxes/imposts applied by a legislative body, the step of transferring funds
10 of said user including transferring to said legislative body a partial or full amount of said taxes/imposts.

53. A method according to claim 51 and where said goods and/or services have associated taxes/imposts applied by a legislative body and a dollar amount equivalent to said taxes/imposts has been transferred to said legislative body, in a
15 reversible transaction further including the step of transferring a partial or full amount of said dollar amount to said user.

54. A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 36 ~~to 53~~ further including the steps of transmitting confirmation messages of completion of all or part of said financial transaction to said trader and said user.

20 55. A method according to ~~any one of~~ claims 43 ~~to 54~~ further including the steps of transmitting confirmation messages to said trader and said user of delivery of said goods and/or services.

56. A method according to ~~any of~~ claims 36 ~~to 55~~ further including the steps of allowing said trader access to an account of said trader, through said service

provider, so as to verify transaction details in said account of said trader.